

U.S. Serial No. 10/756,916

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AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION DATED 2/10/06

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AMENDMENTS IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A device for treating meat products, comprising:

at least one treatment section having comprising a drum which defines a space for accommodating the products, which space comprises a treatment device for treating the products, at least a part of the at least one treatment section being rotatable about an axis of rotation ; and

a discharge device for discharging the products at a discharge point from the space of the treatment section,

wherein the discharge device can assume a discharging position for discharging products which arrive at the discharge point and wherein the discharge device can assume an inactive state in which products which arrive at the discharge point are moved past the discharge point without being discharged, wherein in the discharging position the discharge device is located at least partially within the space that accommodates the products;

and wherein the drum comprises a first end and an opposite second end spaced a distance from the first end along the axis of rotation, wherein the products enter the drum from one of the first or second ends and exit the drum through the other of the first or second ends.

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2. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the discharge device is moved between the discharging position and the inactive state with an actuating device.
3. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein each treatment section is provided with its own actuating device.
4. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein the actuating device is common to a plurality of treatment sections.
5. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein the actuating device comprises a rod which can be actuated from outside the device.
6. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein the actuating device comprises a piston-cylinder unit.
7. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein the actuating device comprises a cam track mechanism.
8. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2, wherein the actuating device is designed to generate a control signal after the discharge device of the treatment section has been moved into the discharging position.

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9. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2, wherein the at least one treatment section comprises at least a first treatment section and a second treatment section through which the products pass in succession and wherein the actuating device is designed to move the discharge device of the second treatment section into its discharging position before moving the discharge device of the first treatment section into its discharging position.

10. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2, wherein the at least one treatment section comprises at least a first treatment section and a second treatment section through which the products pass in succession and wherein the actuating device is designed to move the discharge device of the first and the second treatment sections into their discharging position at substantially the same time.

11. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the treatment device comprises at least one massaging element and the discharge device interacts with the at least one massaging element to assume the discharging position.

12. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the treatment device is designed to move with the aid of a drive.

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13. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 12, wherein the at least one treatment section comprises a plurality of treatment sections and wherein the movement of the treatment devices of at least two of the plurality of treatment sections differs.

14. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the treatment device is designed to be rotated.

15. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 14, wherein the at least one treatment section comprises a plurality of treatment sections and wherein the treatment devices of at least two of the plurality of treatment sections have a common bearing.

16. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 15, wherein the bearing comprises a ring having a circumference along which at least one wheel moves.

17. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 15, wherein the treatment devices of at least two of the plurality of treatment sections are mounted on the same shaft.

18. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 14, wherein the treatment device rotates in a rotational direction about a substantially horizontal axis.

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19. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 18, wherein the treatment device comprises at least one surface oriented at an angle to the rotational direction of the treatment device.

20. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 19, wherein the treatment device comprises a plurality of surfaces oriented at an angle to each other to form at least one point.

21. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 20, wherein the vertex angle of the at least one point is at least approximately 45°.

22. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 20, wherein the plurality of surfaces form a plurality of points separated in the treatment section a distance from one another.

23. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 20, wherein the treatment device is asymmetrically-shaped.

24. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 20, wherein the plurality of surfaces form a plurality of points and wherein at least some of the points have differing dimensions.

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25. (Original) The device of claim 20, wherein the surfaces are integral with a wall of the treatment section.

26. (Original) The device of claim 19, wherein the at least one surface is movable along a stationary wall of the treatment section.

27. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 26, wherein an edge of the at least one surface that is proximal the wall is situated at a distance from the wall.

28. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 26, wherein the at least one surface rotates about an axis of rotation and is pivotable about a hinge having a hinge axis, wherein the hinge axis is substantially parallel to said axis of rotation.

29. (Original) The device of claim 28, wherein at least one spring member is provided for biasing the at least one surface to a predetermined hinge position.

30. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the treatment device comprises a feed device for supplying a substance for treating products, wherein the feed device is arranged at least partially in the space of the treatment section.

31. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the device further comprises:

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at least one wall defining the space for accommodating the products, wherein the wall comprises perforations; and

a chamber positioned outside the space and adjacent to the wall, wherein a treatment medium is supplied from the chamber into the space or discharged from the space into the chamber via the perforations.

32. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the treatment device comprises a device for the transfer of heat via a wall of the space of the treatment section.

33. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the treatment device comprises needles which project into the space of the treatment section.

34. (Original) The device of claim 33, wherein the needles can be moved in a controllable manner in their longitudinal direction.

35. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the treatment section comprises a rotatable drum which defines the space, wherein the drum has an axis of rotation and a direction of rotation.

36. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 35, wherein the treatment device comprises at least one blade arranged in the space, wherein the at least one blade operates to cut products in the space in the direction of rotation.

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37. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 35, wherein the treatment device comprises a rotatable roller for massaging deformable products, wherein the rotatable roller is arranged in the space and has an axis of rotation substantially parallel to the axis of rotation of the drum.

38. (Original) The device of claim 37, wherein the roller is provided with grooves on its outer surface.

39. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the discharge device comprises a product-guiding part, a discharge end of which is located outside the treatment section.

40. (Original) The device of claim 39, wherein the product-guiding part is in the form of a gutter.

41. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the discharge device is capable when in its discharging position of discharging both the products and a substance for treating products from the space.

42. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the discharge device is capable when in its discharging position of discharging the products from the space and returning a substance for treating products to the space.

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43. (Original) The device of claim 42, wherein the discharge device is provided with perforations.

44. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the discharge device is capable when in its discharging position of discharging products from the space but not discharging a substance for treating products located in the space.

45. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein at least a part of a surface of the space of each treatment section is provided with a profile.

46. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein a plurality of treatment sections are formed in a common space and separated by removable partitions, wherein the treatment device of at least one of the plurality of treatment sections is removable.

47. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one treatment section has a wall which is at least partly removable.